[Many of your points have been dealt with by other members. Your suggestion to classify Tamil and Malayala Kammalas separately will be considered.]

170. Women and Public service.

MRS. ANNA CHANDY (*Nominated*), said that she was glad that the Government had recognised the growing tendencies of the times. Qualified women had been appointed in the several departments which were considered to be the close preserve of men for ages and the gratitude of women to Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent and her enlightened minister was too deep for words. But in the same breath it should be said that the present appointments were quite inadequate. It was a long time since a lady clerk each was appointed in the Huzur, in the Registration Director's Office and in the Land Revenue Commissioner's Office. Ever so many vacancies arose after that and no other lady clerk was appointed. Solitary specimens of the female sex could not pick up office work easily and the inevitable result was that those clerks were branded as inefficient by the Superintendents and Managers who were forced to consider women clerks as usurpers. At least two ladies each should be appointed in each of the departments mentioned above.

There were still departments of public service which were closed to women. To popularise the Co-operative movement among women and to enable them to take a more active interest in it, it was necessary to appoint a few women as Cooperative Inspectresses. Such a resolution was actually passed at the 6th All-Travancore Co-operative Conference held at Quilon in June 1930. But as yet, no step had been taken by Government in that direction. Women who had qualified themselves in the Vernacular School leaving and Higher examinations could be employed as copyists in the Courts and Sub-Registrar's Offices. They generally wrote a neater and more readable hand and that would be an easy solution to the difficulties one had to experience in deciphering most of the copies of records. Women should be appointed as Anchal Masters and Sub-Registrars. As regards the Registration Department, Sreemathi Bhagavathi Amma B. A. had been appointed as a clerk in that Department. She should be sent out as a Sub-Registrar very soon. She had put in sufficient service and she had also passed the Registration test as second in the first class and that with honours. That question was discussed in the Legislative Council and Government had assured that more women would be entertained in the department and that women would be made Sub-Registrars. But no further appointments were made though 13 graduates, 27 undergraduates and 100 vernacular trained women had applied for appointments in the Registration Department. In the Anchal Department also, women clerks were given acting appointments, but they were not put in permanent vacancies. Women should also be appointed as Anchal Masters. The department of elementary education should be placed wholly under the control of women. They were undoubtedly better fitted than men to sympathetically understand the child mind

and better fitted to train and educate little children. In most of the western countries, primary education was almost completely in the hands of women.

Similarly, the Government should make it a point to entrust all the work in the Inspectress's office and in the Assistant Inspectress's offices to qualified women. There, men were occupying only those posts for which there were no qualified women hands. Government should pay particular attention to that policy and should not leave the question to be settled according to the whims and fancies of the Chief Inspectress of Schools. Last month there was a communication from the Director's office to the Chief Inspectress of Schools that there were two vacancies in the offices of the Assistant Inspectors of Vernacular Schools at Pathanamthitta and Quilon and asking the Inspectress whether she wanted any male clerks in her department to be replaced by women so that the vacancies could be filled by those displaced men clerks. The Chief Inspectress replied that she did not want any male clerk in the department to be replaced by women. She branded all women as inefficient. It was a matter in which the Government should exercise their own discretion. It was regrettable that not a single woman was employed in the Assistant Inspectress's offices. Government should fill all the future vacancies in the Assistant Inspectress's offices with qualified women hands. In the Chief Inspectress's office there were 5 or 6 women; yet none of the higher posts were given to them, though they had the necessary qualification. The posts of the head clerk, the head accountant and clerks on the highest pay were all occupied by men. Considering the vast number of qualified ladies that were being turned out year after year and considering the fact that most of them were in search of appointment and that they were equally qualified as men, it was but reasonable to ask that at least 25 per cent. of the places in the department in which women could be employed with benefit and with no detriment to the public welfare should be reserved for women. The question of communal representation also should not be disregarded. Handicap marks should be given to the backward and unrepresented communities. Then there would be more efficient work turned out, the public would be benefited and the inefficient would of their own accord back out of the situation. Institution of a competitive examination with handicap marks to the unrepresented communities was a solution for the vexed question of communal representation. Now some women were given places without any such principle and so the jealous office managers could condemn all women as useless and inefficient. If women would be selected according to their ability, the charge of inefficiency and want of intelligence would not be laid at their doors. The scheme of a competitive examination was not quite advantageous to women, but by that arrangement deserving women would get their proper places and women as a whole would not be branded as inefficient. If the scheme was one that could not be worked easily, at least 25 per cent. of the places in each department should be set apart for qualified women.

Removal of the distinction between married and unmarried women in public service was a question that deserved some consideration. Of late, the theory that married women should be driven out of Government service or at least from the Education Department was trying to get some hold on the Government.

The theory had been propounded in the Travancore Women's Educational Conference. A volley of opposition followed and the progenitors of the theory backed out with their schemes. But the Government were considering the matter and they wrote to the various departmental heads to know their opinions about the matter. The claims of Mrs. M. O. Varughese M. A. (Hons.) L. T. were sacrificed for satisfying the then Lady Principal's desire to propound the theory. In spite of the acting work done on the staff of the Women's College, her experience of college work gained elsewhere and her qualifications, that unfortunate lady was denied a place on the college staff and had been superseded by her juniors whose only better qualification was that they were unmarried. Again, it had become a regular practice in the Inspectress's office when women were given their confirmation memos, to add that their engagements would terminate the day they married. The Chief Inspectress went to the extent of illustrating the fact by removing from office one Sreemathy C. J. Meenakshi in Medom year before last, hardly one month after her appointment, when the fact of her being a married woman was brought to light for the first time. The schools and colleges should not be converted into convents and nunneries and the educated women perpetual spinsters for the sake of appointments. The matter should be fully considered by the Government and the shameful and dangerous clause should never again be inserted in the memos from the Inspectress's office. Miss Grose, the Principal of the Women's College, was not a devotee of that creed and hence married women were working in the college.

Women in the Education Department were formerly allowed 24 days' casual leave in a year. But that had been reduced to 14 days perhaps with the idea of inconveniencing female employees so that they might not claim equality with men. Though women might not claim preferential treatment in the matter of appointments, they could not but claim special treatment in some matters after being appointed. A resolution to that effect was passed in the Lady Graduates' Association and it was forwarded to the Government and the resolution was disregarded on the ground that women who came to enter public service should be prepared to undergo such inconvenience. Women might manage and they were really managing with 14 days' casual leave and they might not complain. But a Government that should have a paternal and impartial solicitude for all concerned should seriously view the matter and grant concessions wherever necessary. The Government should not participate in the antagonism felt by some officers in the matter of admitting women into public service.

Certain anomalies stood in the way of women getting appointments. For instance, there was a rule that only those who had passed the Anchal Test could be appointed as Anchal Masters. Though the test had been stopped, the rule was still in force and so newly appointed women clerks in the Anchal office could never hope to get Anchal Masters' posts. They had applied for exemption, but as yet no order was passed upon that petition.

There was another difficulty about the Registration Test. Only those who were in the department could appear for the test and only those who passed the test could be Sub-Registrars. For the Account Test and such other departmental tests, anyone could appear. In the same way, if the Registration Test were left open to all, women could appear for the test and pass and then apply for the Sub-Registrar's post without becoming clerks, as the post was one which did not demand years of previous training.

Another grievance was that almost all the women appointed in the Huzur, in the Anchal Office and in the Account Office were still acting. Until they were confirmed they were not entitled to any kind of leave. Those women employees should be confirmed at an early date. A waiting room should be provided for the women employed in the Huzur Office, Account Office, etc. More qualified women should be appointed in the public service of the State, and their disabilities should be sympathetically viewed and removed as early as possible. In the regime of the beloved Maharani Regent, an ideal married woman and an ideal Ruler, any attempt to create distinction between married and unmarried women in the matter of appointments in the country should be discountenanced.

DEWAN'S REPLY: This time you have pleaded the cause of women and you have pleaded it before an authority, namely, the Government which has already declared itself in your favour. In recent years Government have more than once declared that they are not against the appointment of ladies in service in any department of the State. In reply to the questions that have been asked the Government whether ladies could be appointed in this or that department, the answer has been invariably that there is nothing against the entertainment of ladies in any department. You find as a consequence now there are ladies employed not in one department or in one office but in several offices in the State. Of course, you complain that there are not many such in any particular office and that in many cases they are found alone. You say that is a very great hardship. Well, Rome was not built in a day. It is only fifteen months ago the first lady graduate got her footing in one of these offices and I hope that before long more ladies will be appointed.

You mentioned some rules of practice of certain departments and offices which stand in the way of ladies being entertained in those departments. Well I would suggest to you that in this as in other matters

of social etiquette ladies like you should evince more charity in dealing with the public acts of members of their own sex. It may be that the particular lady officer who stuck to the particular practice thought honestly and sincerely that, in the interest of the department, that practice was necessary. I will merely now tell you that if those matters have been decided in one way they will be reconsidered. If not, they will be considered by the Government. I think that will in a general way apply to all your suggestions.

You then made certain suggestions about the institution of a competitive test. That will be considered by the Committee which is to be appointed ; and upon their report, orders will be passed. The other suggestions of yours will also receive consideration.

171. Ezhavas and Public Service.

MR. V. KOCHUKUNJU VAIDYAN (*Nominated*), speaking in Malayalam, said that appointments in the various departments of public service should be made on the basis of the numerical strength and the educational advancement of the different communities. Government had no fixed policy for making appointments. The claims of a large section of the population should not be disregarded on account of the disabilities imposed by custom and tradition. The denial ot equality of civic rights would hinder the progress of any community.

Preferential treatment should be accorded to the qualified members of the communities which were educationally backward in the past, till the inequalities were removed.

In point of ownership of landed properties, industrial activities and contribution to the State exchequer, the Ezhavas occupied the front rank amongst all communities in the State. The Ezhavas were specially given to the study of Sanskrit, Ayurveda and Astrology.

There were a large number of educated and highly qualified men in the community capable of holding any appointmeut in the State service. The few who had reached responsible positions had demonstrated their grit and ability. Still the policy adopted by Government towards them was not satisfactory. Recently, however, certain appointments were made presumably recognising the claims of the Ezhavas and for those appointments they were grateful to the Government of Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent. Numerically, the Ezhavas had not obtained a share of appointments in any way comparable to those of the Brahmins, Nairs and Christians.

The grievances of the Ezhava community in relation to public service should be redressed by distributing appointments on the basis of its numerical strength and by refusing appointments to members of other communities till the inequalities of the Ezhavas were removed. The Government's special attention should be drawn to the needs of the communities which suffered inequalities in public service.